In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Volume 3 Issue 10, May 14, 2004

Inside this issue:

Message from the Mayor

Welcome Home DC Troops

Community Profile

Hundreds Bike to Work for An<u>nual Event</u>

DC's Technology: Moving Forward

National Planning Conference Comes to DC

Mayor's Congestion Task Force Convenes Inaugural Meeting

Mayor's Week in Review

District Activities

Community News

Upcoming Events

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE MAYOR
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
http://dc.gov

Message from the Mayor

As Mayor of the District, I've learned in recent years that few things are more important in our city than our need to improve the literacy rate among our residents. Literacy is like a seed. From it, great things grow. Improving our literacy rate can have a wide-ranging impact in our city.

During my second inaugural speech in 2003, I addressed the issue of functional illiteracy that is the reality for more than 35 percent of adults in the District of Columbia. This means that 35 percent of adults in our city are unable to locate an intersection on a street map or fill out an application for a Social Security card.

I believe that in order to truly create opportunity for all, and to connect DC residents with jobs, we as a city need to be serious about literacy. Last year, I introduced to our city 20 remarkable individuals who serve the residents of this city as Lifelong Learning Coaches. They remain hard at work, helping our city's residents learn new skills that can make them more productive and happier members of society.

On a similar note, I firmly believe in the value of great literature to help teach all of us new literary skills and to gain a deeper understanding of our culture. That's why on May 11, I helped lead a discussion as part of the DC We Read citywide book club at Coolidge High School in Northwest.

Coolidge is taking some innovative steps when it comes to literacy. Last fall, Coolidge implemented a school-wide initiative—the Coolidge High School Library Program—to improve the library. With improving teen literacy the primary goal of the program, students are reading more—and they're reading books that they like to read. They've been given opportunities to talk about books; and they've been given greater access to their school library and the local public library branch.

I'm also incredibly proud of the District of Columbia Public Library's continued efforts with DC We Read. Its primary objective is to inspire people to rediscover the joy of reading. It encourages people of all backgrounds, ages and educational levels to participate together in a single activity. The goal is to get people involved with one another while exercising their minds as they talk about and examine points that the book brings up. The experience of reading any book is enhanced by the opportunity to discuss it.

Literacy remains a priority of my administration—among young people and adults. As we move forward here in the District, programs like DC We Read, Lifetime Learning Coaches, and literacy efforts at schools like Coolidge are helping us move forward in exciting ways.



AGENCY WEBSITES

Office of Tax and Revenue

Department of Parks and Recreation

<u>Department of</u> <u>Employment Services</u>

Metropolitan Police Department

Office of Boards and Commissions

Commission on the <u>Arts</u> and Humanities

Welcome Home DC Troops

On April 27, I welcomed home troops from the DC National Guard who had been overseas fighting the war in Iraq for the past 18 months.

Soldiers from the DC National Guard's 547th Transportation Company were recognized with the "Freedom Salute." The 547th consists of about 152 soldiers, all returning from Iraq. An interactive concert honoring the troops followed the salute.

More than 250 "Capital Guardians" from the DC National Guard are still mobilized in Afghanistan, Cuba, and other areas around the world. Missions carried out by the 547th included mail runners, special operations, and daily security operations. The units that have already returned



include the 104th Maintenance Division, the 148th Air Ambulance, and the 276th Military Police.

I was incredibly honored to say two words to the soldiers that they'd been wanting to hear for 18 months: Welcome home. It truly was an honor to be there with the most committed soldiers in the world and to stand with the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America.

All of them have demonstrated a special kind of service to our nation. They share a profound respect for each other and their country. As Mayor of the District, I hold them in the highest regard.

I firmly believe that all of our service men and women of the District of Columbia deserve full representation in the United States Congress. It is their birthright as American citizens, and that point is underscored by their devotion to this great country. As always, I pledge our support to the soldiers' families from District government agencies, including our Office of Veterans Affairs.

Community Profile Pedro Lizama

When 13-year-old Pedro Lizama took a family trip to El Salvador, he noticed that many of the families there didn't have the material items that Americans have. Pedro decided to do something about it. The 8th grader from Jefferson Junior High collected clothing from his neighbors, family, and peers and delivered them to 35 families in El Salvador.

"Every time I go back [to El Salvador] there are things I want to do for them," Pedro said.

During the trip to his family's home country, Pedro asked his mother why El Salvadorians weren't dressed like him. He told her he wanted to collect and take them clothing, and she supported his idea. "My mom was a big support," Pedro said. "It was real cool."



Pedro Lizama

Pedro said when he hand-delivered the clothing to families in his grandparents' neighborhood, they were all thankful. He said that they gave him back good feelings, so it was like an equal trade. Pedro was named as a 2004 state honoree for the Prudential Spirit of Community Award for his efforts.

A first generation American and native Washingtonian, Pedro lives in Ward 2 with his family, including an older sister and brother. Besides being an international service hero, Pedro likes to play football, soccer, and to skateboard. His favorite subjects in school are science and history. He proclaims himself a "toolhead" because he loves motorcycles.

Pedro is the November 2003 youth winner of the Mayor's Community Service Award, sponsored by Serve DC. If you would like to nominate a youth or adult for the monthly award, visit http://serve.dc.gov for nomination information or call (202) 727-9461.

LINK TO OTHER WEBSITES

DC Agenda

Hands on DC

DC Convention and Tourism

DC Public Library

Hundreds Bike to Work for Annual Event

This year's annual Bike to Work Day, sponsored by the Council of Governments and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), was a great success. As part of the event, I bicycled from my home in Northwest to a rally at Freedom Plaza, where throngs of bikers awaited.

Bike to Work Day has been held in the District of Columbia for nearly 30 years. It has grown into a regional event with 18 pit stops around the city. Thousands of riders participated this year, including about 800 who gathered at Freedom Plaza on the morning of May 7.

WABA has a very strong partnership with our city—assisting with the update of the city's bike plan and conducting cyclist and pedestrian safety education in DC elementary schools this fall under a DC Department of Transportation grant. The

Council of Governments helped fund Bike to Work Day through its Commuter Connections program.



It's frightening to think that more than 30 percent of adults in DC are overweight and 20 percent are obese. Twenty percent of people who responded to a recent survey said they had not exercised at all in the past 30 days. As we know all too well, inactivity puts our residents at risk for serious problems like heart disease and diabetes. To improve the fitness and health of our citizens, we should make bicycling a part of the solution.

Here in the District, we're helping get people off their couches, out of their cars, and onto their bikes. How are we doing it? After a year of hard work, our DC Bike Plan is almost complete. It calls for:

- 150 miles of new bike routes
- 60 miles of bike lanes,
- and 20 miles of new trails.

DC's Technology: Moving Forward

On April 30, I traveled to San Antonio, Texas, for the 2004 Technology Solutions Awards Luncheon. The purpose of my visit was to tout our tremendous accomplishments in the world of technology here in the District of Columbia.

When I took office in 1999, we had 370 separate, unlinked, often redundant computer systems. Our email system maxed out at 200 messages per day, in a government with 32,000 employees.

We had nine separate mainframe data centers, all lacking even basic support, and all performing similar functions. The average age of a computer application was nearly a decade. We did have a website—all of 20 pages.

Now, we have a 100,000-page web portal offering hundreds of online services. In 2001, DC.Gov received 1.5 million hits. Last year, we received almost 100 million hits.

Today, we're focused on extending our technology frontier. We're launching state-of-the art tech projects that are some of the best in the nation. These include our citywide electronic GIS atlas; a Unified Communications Center (UCC); DC-Net; and our high-speed wireless initiative.

"DC Guide" is an atlas of 50 layered digital maps of our city's geographical features. It maps every detail you can imagine.

Our next cutting-edge project is our Unified Communications Center. The UCC is a state-of-the-art center where we will consolidate call-taking and dispatch for 911 calls, non-emergency 311 calls, and calls to our central DC information number, 727-1000.

Then, there's "DC-Net." DC-Net is a citywide fiber-optic voice and data network we're building to replace the lines we leased from our local telephone company. It's a network 1600 times the speed of a T-1 line, and we own it ourselves.

Finally, there's our wireless program, which is vital to our role as the nation's capital. We just completed a citywide upgrade that gives us complete reliability for first-responders, even in our subway system.

With projects like these, we will make a technology contribution not just to our own residents and businesses, but to the nation. When we've accomplished that, we will have completed a remarkable technology journey. And it's been an exciting journey to say the least.

National Planning Conference Comes to DC

On April 25, I welcomed city planners from around the United States to Washington, DC for a meeting of the American Planning Association. The association promotes effective city planning to make cities healthy, well designed, equitable, sustainable, and economically viable. At the meeting we discussed city planning: past, present and future.

More than two centuries ago, Pierre L'Enfant designed a new federal city on the banks of the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. One century later, the McMillan Commission, led by great planners like Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Daniel Burnhamm, created the beautiful parks and public spaces we enjoy today—places like the National Mall and the Capitol grounds.

Now, we're restoring the great tradition of planning in Washington, DC. But we're doing it differently than in 1791 or in 1901. Until a few years ago, our plans were done for us—by the federal government. Now, we're charting our own course for the future: a future defined by Washingtonians.

Today, we're the fourth largest metropolitan region in the country. We have more than 7 million residents. Our region stretches 100 miles from end to end. It spans three states and the District of Columbia.

Here in the District we have unique planning challenges. We have the challenge of conducting planning without a voting member in Congress. And we have the challenge of bridging the employment, education, and income divides so all of our residents share in the opportunities our city offers.

So much has happened in recent years in our city. In the last four years, we've added 7,000 housing units and have 8,000 more under construction today. We've helped finance 12,000 affordable housing units. We've added 12 million square feet of office space and have another 6 million square feet under construction.

The changes in Washington today could not have been possible without good city planning. City planning is vitally important. I'm proud to say that I have rebuilt our city's planning agency and assembled one of the most capable planning departments in the country. Our Office of Planning has grown from a staff of 10 to a staff of 65. Now, we have the capacity to create great plans and programs.

Mayor's Congestion Task Force Convenes Inaugural Meeting

On May 6, I convened the first Mayor's Downtown Congestion Task Force at Judiciary Square in Northwest.

This important task force is composed of Councilmembers Carol Schwartz, Jack Evans, Harold Brazil, Sharon Ambrose and Jim Graham as well as members of the business community, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, business improvement districts and relevant city agencies. The task force will study creative and practical ways we can reduce traffic congestion in our city.

The District is growing in exciting new ways. One year ago we opened our new convention center, and we're redeveloping the former one. Soon Gallery Place, in the heart of Chinatown, will have nearly 200 units of housing, a 14-screen movie theater, dining, and retail.

As many of us know all too well, congestion is an unfortunate byproduct of our success. Congestion has costs for businesses, residents, and visitors. Congestion means time, frustration, and bad air quality. Now more than ever, we need to manage congestion before it hampers growth and development in the city.

Of course, we're not alone. Congestion affects major cities around the world. Their experience has shown that congestion can't be "fixed," but it can be improved.

I'm asking for help from citizens and the business and non-profit communities in creating a vision for how we can address traffic congestion in our city. We're focusing on the downtown area because it's the economic engine of our city—and it's growing by leaps and bounds every day.

The task force will meet as a whole once this summer and once in the fall. Five subcommittees will meet more frequently to discuss specific strategies in depth.

Mayor's Week in Review

Baseball Officials Meet with Mayor

On **May 6**, I joined other local officials in meeting with officials from Major League Baseball. We delivered our pitch to bring a baseball team to the District, and our hopes are very high that baseball will return to DC.

Mayor Delivers Remarks at Senior Day Citizens' Expo

On May 6, I delivered remarks at our city's 40th Annual Senior Citizens' Day and Health Expo, held at the DC Armory in Southeast.

Mayor Participates in DHS Reads

On May 7, I participated in our DC Department of Human Services DHS Reads! program, which promotes literacy.

Mayor Bikes to Work

On May 7, I participated in Bike to Work Day 2004 – which promotes biking to ease our city's traffic congestion and air pollution.

Mayor Attends Funeral for Chelsea Cromartie

I joined hundreds of mourners at the funeral for 8-year-old Chelsea Cromartie on May 8.

Mayor Participates in Global Family Day Planning Conference

On May 10, I participated at the Global Family Day Planning Conference at American University.

Mayor Helps Kick Off Cover the Uninsured Week

On May 10, I made remarks and helped to kick off the national Cover the Uninsured Week on Freedom Plaza.

Mayor Attends Meeting in Georgetown

On May 10, I attended a meeting of the Citizens Association of Georgetown.

Mayor Unveils Panda Sculptures

On May 10, I went to the National Zoo to launch Pandamania—our city's newest public art project.

Mayor Meets with Chinese Delegation

On **May 11**, I met with the Mayor of Beijing and we signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote increased cooperation between our two cities.

Groundbreaking for Luke C. Moore Academy

On May 11, I participated in a groundbreaking for the Luke C. Moore Academy located at 1001 Monroe Street, NE.

DC Youth Advisory Council Meets

During the evening of May 11, I attended a meeting of the DC Youth Advisory Council.

District Activities



Mayor Williams unveils two of the many panda sculptures to be placed throughout the city this summer by DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. The unveiling took place at the National Zoo on Monday, May 10.



On May 12, Mayor Williams traveled to Redskins Park to tape two public service announcements with Redskins coach Joe Gibbs promoting the District's Safe Passages Summer Program. The announcements are scheduled to run on DC cable channels with over 400 placements expected.

Community News

- Mayor Issues Statement on Shooting of Chelsea Cromartie
- Fallen Officers Honored During National Police Week
- DC Fire/EMS Receives National Acclaim for Cardiac Care

View all News Releases

Upcoming Events

5/11 to 5/15	Golden Olympics Various Locations For more information, call (202) 282-0753
5/15	Break Free Empowerment Workshops (Mental Health Month) 4103 Benning Road, NE $11 \text{ am} - 2 \text{ pm}$
5/18	Youth Basketball Game (Mental Health Month) Kennedy Recreation Center 7th and P Streets, NW 4:30 pm – 7:30 pm
5/20	Awards Dinner and Ceremony (Mental Health Month) Washington Navy Yard 7th and P Streets, NW 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
5/22	Ward 7 Walk-a-Thon Family Event (Mental Health Month) Deanwood Metro Center to the IDEA Public Charter School
	1027 45th Street, NE 11 am – 3 pm